

Dateline DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Leadership Institute Graduates First Class

The first wave of future management professionals graduated from the DHMH Leadership Institute in January. Eighteen people completed the rigorous two-year program, which was created by the Department's Training Services Division (TSD). Two other classes are scheduled to graduate this May and June.

"Some of our top managers are nearing retirement age," said Dr. Nancy Hoffman, interim chief of TSD, "so we developed a program that would prepare people for more responsible leadership positions."

The idea was born when four Personnel Services Administration leaders — Alan Baker, Dave Long, Janet Nugent and Hoffman — realized steps had to be taken to prepare for the Department's future. The result is a two-year program that combines classroom work with on-line studies and a team project.

"This involves a lot of personal time on the part of the students," Hoffman said. Classes generally meet once a month, and on-line work can easily consume another two to three days per month. Additional time is necessary to complete the team project, all while maintaining a regular job schedule.

The curriculum is designed to give graduates the tools to be successful managers, regardless of future opportunities within DHMH. Hoffman stressed that graduates cannot be promised career advancements because of employment regulations. But even without any guarantees, the skills gained through the Institute put them in better positions to fill future vacancies.



Members of the first graduating class.

*Cynthia Petion,
a member of the
first graduating class
of the*



*DHMH Learning Institute,
addresses the class during
graduation ceremonies.*

Students represent a cross-section of the Department and are selected after an evaluation process that involves supervisors, subordinates and peers. In exchange for the training, they must commit to remain in State service for two years following the completion of the Institute.

In addition to the four people who created the program, Angeline Huffman and Susan Steele have had important roles.

For further information about the Leadership Institute, please contact Dr. Hoffman at 410-931-1141.

And the graduates are . . .

Larrie Bennett, Office of Planning and Finance; **Christine Brigandi**, Personnel Services Administration; **Trudy Brown**, Office of Contract Policy, Management and Procurement; **Cathy Croghan-Strugill**, Beneficiary Services Administration;

Continued

Leadership Institute *Cont.*

Burnese Davis, Division of Recoveries and Financial Services; **Margaret Heald**, Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ); **Phil Hemler**, Information Resources Management Administration (IRMA); **Michele McDonald**, Office of Planning Development and Finance; **Linda Neeley**, IRMA; **Cynthia Petion**, Mental Hygiene Administration; **Paul Scholz**, Medical Care Programs; **Debra Simon**, Maryland Children's Health Program; **Deena Speights-Napata**, Health Care Financing; **Leona Spencer**, Medical Care Program; **Linda A. Thompson**, Springfield Hospital Center; **Michael Wajda**, OHCQ; **Allan Wood**, Division of Program Cost and Analysis; and **Michelle Woodson**, OHCQ.

Please note

There is a new general phone number to reach the Training Services Division at its new White Marsh location. It is 410-931-1513. The division's fax number is 410-933-2028.

OCPMP Receives National Accreditation

The Office of Contract Policy, Management and Procurement (OCPMP) earned the Outstanding Agency Accreditation Achievement Award from the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP) in January.

No other agency in Maryland State government has ever achieved this accreditation, which recognizes those agencies that lead

the public procurement profession. It is based on best practices standards in governmental procurement and is valid for three years.

Secretary Sabatini, in a congratulatory letter along with a certificate of recognition, wrote, "The OCPMP Team has so admirably demonstrated its commitment to the highest level of excellence by obtaining this accreditation, thereby serving as a model for other organizations "

OCPMP Director Robert Rucker said, "This provides validation and well-deserved recognition for the hard-working OCPMP Team. It is a great pleasure and very rewarding to work with such dedicated and exemplary individuals who strive every day to provide outstanding customer service in ensuring procurement performance excellence for the Department."

OCPMP will receive its accreditation award at NIGP's annual conference in August. NIGP is "a nonprofit educational organi-

zation dedicated to helping governments manage tax dollars wisely". ***Congratulations to OCPMP!***

Performance Excellence Nominations Are Due

Nominations are being accepted through March 15 for the **2004 DHMH Performance Excellence Awards**.

Any DHMH employee who excels in either customer satisfaction, innovation or leadership may be nominated. Outstanding teams of employees are also eligible in the process improvement category.

Winners will receive eight hours of incentive leave.

For more information and nomination forms, go to <http://indhmmh> or www.dhmmh.state.md.us/pe/html/perfawards.htm . For more information, please contact Lee Williamson, Performance Excellence Coordinator, at lwilliamson@dhmmh.state.md.us or 410-767-5190.

Congratulations to . . .

Sarah Bur, a tuberculosis nurse consultant for DHMH, who has been named Chair-elect of the National Committee for the Elimination of Tuberculosis. This is a prominent national advisory committee that works closely with the CDC, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, and other TB elimination advocacy groups from across the country.



Welcome to two new health officers. **Dr. Leland Spencer** (right) is health officer for Caroline and Kent counties. **Dr. Ulder Tillman** (left) began her tenure as health officer in Montgomery County in November.



Health Disparities Affect Many Marylanders

Did you know that mortality rates for black infants born in Maryland in 2001 were more than twice as high as for whites? Or that African Americans are projected to have a life expectancy nearly six years less than whites?

These DHMH statistics are typical of the life expectancy gap seen

between whites and ethnic populations on a national level. It is part of a trend referred to as health disparities.

The National Institutes of Health defines 'health disparities' as differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, and burden of diseases and other adverse health conditions that exist among specific population groups. While the causes of health disparities are complex, there is no doubt that African Americans in Maryland are affected.

Health disparities faced by African Americans begin at birth. Higher death rates for infants are often related to low birth weights, which in turn are related to inadequate prenatal care. Infants and children also have lower vaccination rates.

The disparities continue into adulthood. African Americans in Maryland suffer higher rates of serious medical problems, yet they are less likely than whites to receive screenings and preventive care. African Americans have a higher death rate than whites from all of Maryland's top four causes of death — heart disease and stroke; cancer; pulmonary diseases such as bronchitis and emphysema; and diabetes. They also face a higher death rate from AIDS.

Tobacco use is a direct risk factor for cardiovascular disease, pulmonary disease and cancer, as well as a risk factor for amputations caused by diabetes. While the rate of tobacco use among African Americans has declined in recent years, nearly

Continued

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, March 16 — **Bioterrorism Speaker Series**; O'Connor Building Lobby Conference Room L-3; 12:15 - 12:45 p.m. Guest speaker will be Mr. Kenneth Hyde. Phone 410-767-5732 for more information.

Thursday, March 25 — *workshop*: **Targeting and Achieving Program Outcomes in Human Service Organizations**; University of Maryland School of Social Work; 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.; \$125. Approved for Category I continuing education credits. Phone 410-706-1839 for more information.

Friday and Saturday, March 26 - 27 — *course*: **Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias**; Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. For more information, please call 410-955-3169 or 410-955-2959.

Tuesday, April 13 — *workshop*: **Transforming Conflict into Cooperation: Social Work Applications of the Community Conferencing Process**; University of Maryland School of Social Work; 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.; \$125. Approved for Category I continuing education credits. Phone 410-706-1839 for more information.

Thursday, April 15 — *workshop*: **The Chronic Disease Model of Addiction: Nuts and Bolts for Clinicians**; University of Maryland School of Social Work; 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.; \$125. Approved for Category I continuing education credits. Phone 410-706-1839 for more information.

Tuesday, April 20 — *workshop*: **Stress Management Techniques in Clinical Practice: Restoring Clients and Ourselves**; University of Maryland School of Social Work; 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.; \$125. Approved for Category I continuing education credits. Phone 410-706-1839 for more information.

Tuesday and Wednesday, April 20 - 21 — **Blood Drive**, 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. O'Connor Building lobby. Call Stephanie Brown at 410-767-6403 for more information or to reserve a time.

Thursday, April 22 — *workshop*: **Depression Among Women and its Impact on Parenting: Assessment and Intervention**; University of Maryland School of Social Work; 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.; \$125. Approved for Category I continuing education credits. Phone 410-706-1839 for more information.

Sunday, May 2 — **National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Walk**; Centennial Park in Howard County; check-in: 10:00 a.m., walk: 11:00 a.m. Co-sponsored by the Mental Hygiene Administration. Call Jean Smith at 410-402-7517 for more information.

Health Disparities *Con't*

19 percent of adults are still lighting up.

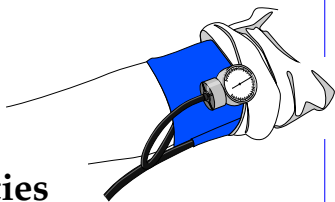
Regular medical care can play an important role in risk reduction. Because African Americans are more likely to be uninsured and less likely to see a doctor regularly, they often miss getting screenings that could detect health problems — like cervical or prostate cancer — in the early, more curable stages.

DHMH sponsors a range of statewide programs that provide preventive screenings for at-risk populations. For example, the Breast and Cervical Cancer Program provides breast and cervical cancer screening services to low income, uninsured women ages 50 to 64. In addition, smoking cessation resources and referrals are available through the Center for Health Promotion, Education and Tobacco Use Prevention.

Editor's Note: Thanks to Tara Snyder, Community Health Educator in the Center of Health Promotion, Education and Tobacco Use Prevention, for writing this article.

Disparities and Cardiovascular Disease

Baltimore City has almost double the rate of cardiovascular disease (CVD) when compared to Montgomery County, the jurisdiction with the lowest rate, reflecting Maryland's socio-economic disparities.



And while CVD deaths have been reduced over the past few decades, the reduction has been smaller for women, especially African American women.

CVD, primarily heart disease and stroke, causes over a third of all deaths in Maryland.

There are many initiatives to reduce disparities in CVD rates around the State.

Faith-based blood pressure programs, established through grants to local health departments, reach African American men and women with screening and monitoring interventions, important prevention messages about the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet to lower blood pressure, and offer referrals.

In Anne Arundel County, for example, the Smart Church Program has helped 420 participants lower their blood pressure. Talbot County's CVD program, reaching many people with high blood pressure and diabetes, organizes a church-based walking group whose members maintained their physical activity levels at six-month follow-up.

Title 1 school interventions in several counties target children from low-income families with learning activities on healthy eating and physical activity.

In partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, DHMH used Team Nutrition grant funds to develop a nutrition curriculum for use in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade physical education and

health classes in Maryland schools.

Working cooperatively with the Maryland Departments of Agriculture and Aging, DHMH, through Maryland 5 A Day, supports the distribution of \$190,000 in coupons each year for the purchase of fruits and vegetables by Maryland seniors and WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program participants, and promotes the 5 A Day message to these groups.

For more information about CVD and programs to reduce disparities, please contact Peggy Yen at 410-767-6781.

Editor's Note: Thanks to the staff in the Family Health Administration's Division of Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition for writing this article.



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